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CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF CLERKS AND ELECTION OFFICIALS

DEAN C. LOGAN, PRESIDENT

Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk
12400 Imperial Highway, Suite 7001, Norwalk, CA 90650
(562) 462-2716 – Fax (562) 929-4790
E-Mail: DLogan@rrcc.lacounty.gov
CACAO website: www.cacao58.org

May 12, 2017

The Honorable Shirley Weber
State Capitol Building, Room 3123
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assembly Member Weber:

The California Association of Clerks and Election Officials Legislative Committee has reviewed **AB 801**, your proposed legislation relating to the restructuring of the San Diego County Independent Redistricting Commission. Regrettably, we must oppose this legislation due to the following concerns:

- **County elections offices are non-partisan:** This proposal seeks to compose a commission that will be proportional to the political party preferences of the total population of San Diego County. This proposal is asking the non-partisan county elections official to weigh an applicant's political party affiliation as a large determining factor in the ranking process to ensure that there is a proportional amount of applicants to the political party demographics. Accordingly, this proposal is placing a political slant on an office that needs to remain non-partisan by design.
- **Cascading effect on other California counties:** Even though your proposal is for San Diego County only, SB 598 (Lara; 2015-2016) detailed a similar process for the County of Los Angeles. County elections officials across the state are concerned that changing the redistricting procedure this close to the next redistricting in 2021 and changing their role in helping to create these commissions when the current law places that duty in the hands of the board of supervisors and outside the non-partisan office of elections. Through SB1331 (Kehoe, 2011-2012), a San Diego County specific independent redistricting committee is already established for the next decennial redistricting.
- **Timing of the commission appointments:** This commission is to be created by December 31, 2020. To meet the timeline that is detailed in the bill, which includes the names of the top 60 applicants being publicly posted for at least 30 days before a regularly scheduled board meeting where the commission appointments occur, the county elections official will need to be doing the application review and rankings at the same time he or she is conducting the Presidential General election, thereby diverting time and resources from other election duties and requiring additional funding (e.g. attorneys, investigatory staff, administrative staff and office space) to manage these duties.
- **County elections official required to screen and rank applicants:** This proposal creates a new, complex and subjective duty for the county elections official by asking that department to accept and screen applications for the commission. In addition to verifying registration data such as residence address, political party affiliation, and voting history, the county elections official has to verify that the applicant (or family member) has not served in an office, been employed by a campaign, committee or political party, or worked as a lobbyist. Additionally, the county elections official must determine that the applicant demonstrates the appropriate understanding of redistricting process including impartiality and an appreciation for diverse population and geography of San Diego County. The county elections official must then rank the applications and publish their top 60 applicants for public review.

It is understandable that the county elections official would be asked to verify the registration information, because that is housed in their registration records and is definitive, but this proposal

also asks for the official to research the applicant and their immediate family to ensure they meet the requirements surrounding previous political involvement, and to determine an applicant's understanding of processes and ideals which is extremely subjective, especially through a paper application.

For these reasons and others, the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials Legislative Committee is opposing AB 801. If you have any questions, please feel to contact me at tricia.webber@santacruzcounty.us or (831) 454-2409, or Jill LaVine, Sacramento County Registrar of Voters at lavinej@saccounty.net or (916) 875-6060.

Respectfully,



Tricia Webber

Co-Chair, CACEO Election Legislative Committee
California Association of Clerks and Election Officials

cc: Jessica Peters, Principal Consultant, Assembly Appropriations
Jared Yoshiki, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus
Nick Brokaw, Sacramento Advocates, Inc.
Silvio Ferrari, Sacramento Advocates, Inc.
Jill LaVine, Co-Chair, CACEO Election Legislative Committee